

Nothing for Gender Equality in George's Budget

Yet again, Britain's poorest women lose out. Lone parents and single female pensioners are among the poorest citizens in Britain today. And, as the Women's Budget Group (WBG) has already identified, they have suffered most from the Chancellor's harsh cuts to public spending.

The WBG had hoped that this time round the Chancellor's claim that 'we are all in this together' would include measures to help these women. But nothing in today's announcements does that.

Raising the income tax threshold or lowering fuel duty will help these groups least because they are less likely than other groups to have income above £8,000 or to own cars.

That's not all.

Young women are now more affected by unemployment than young men. The 40,000 new apprenticeships announced today do not make up for the 55,000 social care apprenticeships abandoned by the Coalition government last year.

What measures will be taken to ensure that these new apprenticeships will benefit young men and women equally and be used to challenge gender stereotypes in employment opportunities?

And, while it sounds positive to reduce the regulations that small businesses are subjected to, in practice not extending the right to request flexible employment to all workers will undermine men and women's capacity to combine caring for families with paid employment.

The WBG will be releasing a more extensive analysis of the implication of the budget for gender equality shortly.

The Women's Budget Group is a network of over 200 academics and activists. For more information, please contact Amy Watson (admin@wbg.org.uk), Coordinator of the Women's Budget Group. Diane Elson (WBG Chair) and Sue Himmelweit can be contacted for further comment on 01206 828231 and 020 7272 8485 respectively.